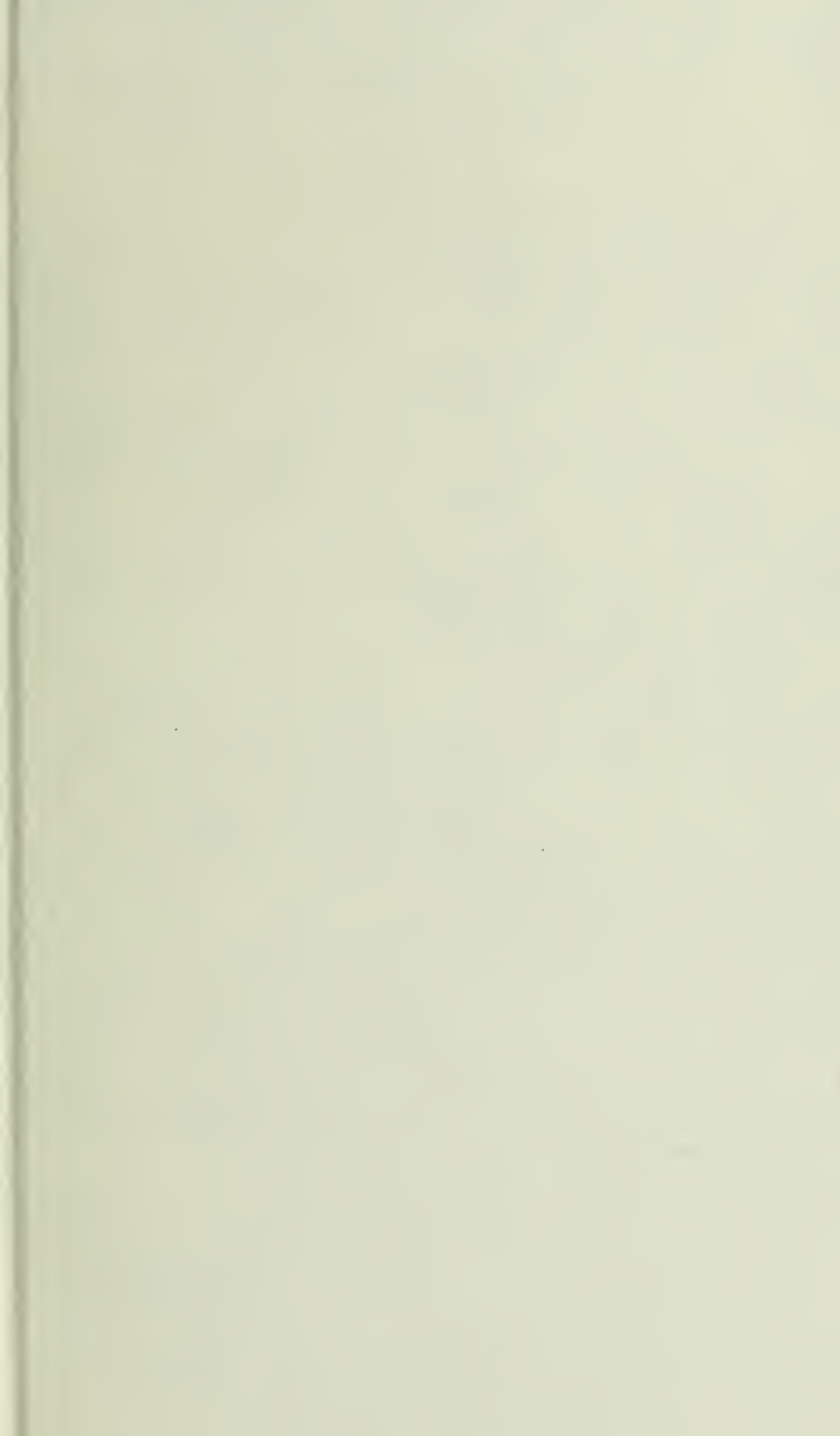




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A
POLITICAL MIRROR;
OR, A
SUMMARY REVIEW
OF THE
PRESENT REIGN.

WITH
NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND HISTORICAL,

AND AN AUTHENTIC

L I S T

OF THE SHIPS AND VESSELS OF WAR, TAKEN AND
DESTROYED, SINCE THE COMMENCE-
MENT OF HOSTILITIES.

*Her princes, in the midst thereof, are like a roaring lion ravening
the prey: they have exercised robbery; yea! they have oppressed
the stranger wrongfully: they have shed innocent blood to get
dishonest gain.*

Quis talia fando temporet a lachrymis?

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR FIELDING AND WALKER IN PATERNOSTER-ROW.

MDCCLXXIX.

AC 911. 1779. M54

E R R A T U M.

Page 39, for *we had passed the Rubicon*, read *that the Americans had passed the Rubicon*, and that if we did not cut their throats, they would cut ours.

POLITICAL MIRROR.

IT would be difficult to decide, a century hence, how a nation, great in arms and in reputation, could have fallen, in the course of a very few years, from the zenith of human grandeur to a state of poverty, contempt, and imbecility, if the invention of letters had not enabled mankind to transmit to future generations the measures of princes and of ministers, and to examine, without reserve, into the motives of their conduct.

It is to the fidelity of history, that we are often indebted for the moderation we meet with from bad men invested with authority; and if the dread of being exposed to after times has operated as a check to tyranny and lawless ambition, we have only to lament that it has not been of equal efficacy in all nations and in all ages of the world. The innumerable instances in which a considerable portion of the human species have groaned beneath the yoke of unfeeling despotism, abundantly prove that this apprehension has not been equal to the task of confining the views and designs of princes to the interests and happiness of their subjects; on the contrary, the history of human nature is croud-

ed with examples of perfidy, cruelty, and oppression, which no circumstances could justify, and neither a sense of shame, nor remorse of conscience prevent. From the earliest period of recorded time, we find, that the lust of dominion hath rendered princes less sensible of their obligations to their subjects ; and that from the first establishment of civil society, mankind have ever been engaged in resisting slavery, and contending for those rights, which Providence, in its infinite wisdom, having decreed to *all*, never intended as the exclusive property of a *few*.—The annals of the world are replete with contentions for unlimited power on one hand, and with instances of resistance on the other ; and while princes, ambitious of prerogative, have dared to derive their right to sovereignty from heaven, the people, no less jealous of their liberties, have denied the insolent claim, and triumphed at once over impiety and injustice. The various commotions in which this country hath been engaged since the Norman conquest, have always terminated in favour of the people ; and if they have not cultivated the advantages which they have gained over despotism, as they might, and as they ought to have done, and if they have neglected to perfect our excellent model of a constitution into a permanent and incorruptible system of government, it is because the times of civil discord do not afford leisure for reflection, and mankind, however inclined they may be to secure themselves from tyranny and oppression, are ever impatient in a state of anarchy for the return of peace and good order.

That

That Cromwell felt the justice of this observation, is evident from the anxiety he discovered, and the extreme caution with which he personally conducted himself during the short period of his usurpation.

The nation was very far from being reconciled to his authority, though the treason * and duplicity of Charles I. had been punished with death, nor could his vigorous, or rather his magnanimous, administration obtain the confidence of the people, sufficient to give stability to his government. With an army indeed at his devotion, he contrived to govern under the title of Protector, but the avidity with which the whole kingdom at his death

* By treason, is meant, *treason against the constitution*, by the first magistrate presuming to raise money without the authority of parliament; committing the representatives of the people to prison during pleasure, and afterwards oppressing them with heavy fines, for having discharged their duty to their constituents: with many other acts of violence and injustice. These were the treasons with which *that* weak and inglorious reign abounded, and which finally, but deservedly, brought the royal traitor to the block.

In latter times, we have seen members of the house of commons deprived of their civil and military employments, for having defended the rights of the people against the encroachments of the crown; and who would, as well as Sir Miles Hobart, Sir P. Hayman, Selden, Coriton, Long, and Strode, in the time of *Charles the First*, have been *fined and imprisoned*, if fear had not operated as a check to that power, which could only manifest its resentment, without the risque of its again reverting to the people, from whom it originated, and to whom it properly belongs.

invited the fugitive son of the convicted tyrant to the exercise of the regal authority, proves to us how impatient they were for the restoration of monarchy, and that monarchy alone could give peace and unanimity to a divided people. Another instance of this truth, appears in the revolution of 1688. The expulsion of James II. was infinitely more agreeable to the general sense of the nation, than the death of his father had been ; and it was reasonable to have expected, after the injurious treatment they had received from a succession of kings, and the noble spirit with which they had asserted their rights, that they would have secured themselves as effectually as possible against future danger ; but the indecent alacrity with which they meanly implored the instrument of their revenge to become their sovereign, is an irrefragable argument, that the multitude understand the rights of obedience much better than the blessings of liberty.

William III. who was at once a politician and a soldier, preferred the cabinet to the field ; and accomplished that by *intrigue*, which he was too prudent to attempt with the *sword*. He perfectly understood the character of the people with whom he had to deal, and had recourse to *art*, to obtain what *force* could never have procured. His first care was to establish a *monied*, in opposition to the landed *interest* : hence the origin of funds, which are now numerous enough to bear an equal value almost with the whole landed property of the kingdom, and which have enabled his successors

fors to undermine, and in some instances to destroy, the virtue and spirit of our government, without violating its forms. The three estates of the kingdom, still preserve appearances, and our obedience to laws is yet exacted from us under the forms which the constitution prescribes, but no man can be audacious, or ignorant enough, to affirm, that the people, at this time, are faithfully represented; and it is certainly of very little import to them, whether they are enslaved by a *standing army*, or a *mercenary parliament*. The latter mode affords impunity indeed to the prince, and secures him from exile or the block, and this consideration alone, perhaps, preserves us from the insolent tyranny of a military force. It is to the impatience already described, to which we must attribute the numerous defects, with which the constitution abounds; and though the wisdom of our ancestors was principally directed to circumscribe the regal authority, and to give to the body of the people the greatest, or rather the most important share in the government, by allotting to their representatives the exclusive right of disposing, in the first instance, of their property; yet the enormous power of the crown, and the means which it possesses of *detaching* the representative from the interest of his constituent, by administering to his necessities, if a needy man, or to his pleasures or his vanity, if a voluptuous or an ambitious man, has in a great measure defeated the wholesome policy and precaution of our forefathers, and left us little else to boast of, than the rectitude and patriotism of their intentions.

The scandalous venality of the commons, which in the infancy of that system of corruption, which was introduced among us at the commencement of the present century, courted secrecy and obscurity, no longer seeks the silent shade of night, but in open day triumphs in its guilt, and claims the wages of iniquity as its right. Places of trust or profit, titles or pensions, are the objects to which the representative and Aristocratic bodies look up, and as the sovereign is entrusted with the disposal of them, an implicit acquiescence to his measures will most likely be the condition on which they are bestowed.*

It

* It is unnecessary to enumerate the proofs which exist of parliamentary infidelity ; but there is a recent instance of it, so peculiarly marked with a thorough contempt of all principle, and even of all respect to appearances, that it will neither be impertinent, nor perhaps useless, on the eve of a general election, to repeat it. In the years 1772 and 1773, the honourable Constantine Phipps (now Lord Mulgrave) distinguished himself by a warm and active opposition to administration, and especially to the first lord of the admiralty, whom he then affirmed to be not only incapable of discharging the trust reposed in him, but to have been guilty of a wanton and criminal abuse of it. The dock-yards were described as unprovided with a sufficient quantity of stores, the King's ships asserted to be mouldering in ruin for want of repairs, and the enormous sums of public money, voted for these particular services, were said to have been applied to the obtaining of an undue influence over the county and town of Huntingdon. The misapplication of the supplies, the deplorable state of the navy, and the wilful, and sometimes contemptuous, neglect of its officers, whose names were not registered in the black list of parasites and favourites at the admiralty, were the general topics which attracted the thunder of Mr. Phipp's

It is unnecessary to illustrate the justice of this remark by a repetition of facts, which are familiar to

Phipps's eloquence. Many were betrayed into an opinion of his zeal and sincerity by the violence and constancy of his declamation ; and the popularity he had acquired, both in and out of parliament, rendered him an adversary of too much consequence to be disregarded or contemned. Overtures were accordingly made, and the nation, in a short time, beheld him invested with a particular command, the ostensible object of which was to penetrate, by the north-west, into the Indian ocean, and which the most trifling smattering in the philosophy and theory of the earth must have informed the *inquisitive commodore* to have been absolutely impracticable.

Soon after the return of the little squadron from this *Quixote* expedition, the general election forced him to become a candidate for that trust which he had so recently violated ; but the freemen of Newcastle had the spirit and good sense to reject him with contempt ; and he was finally indebted for his restoration to a seat in parliament to the very man whom he had publicly and repeatedly reproached with incapacity and malversation !-- From this moment, he appeared in a new character ; He appeared as the friend and companion of the minister whom he had insulted ; and, now no longer the *enemy*, but the hardy *champion*, of the admiralty, we hear him justifying, as far as noise and impudence can justify, the very measures which he had before reprobated and opposed, and eager to throw down the gauntlet at the first man who presumes to question the *omniscience* of his noble patron and benefactor. The conversion of this gentleman to the *true faith* was not only productive of honours and advantage to himself, but to his family. His brother, a young man, and a very young lieutenant in the navy, was preferred to the rank of master and commander, and a post ship sent after him to New-York, contrary to a maxim which his lordship had adopted, never to make either a captain or a lieutenant at home ; and which maxim had been faithfully observed towards the late honorable Captain Talmash, and indeed upon every

to the meanest individual in the empire. It is sufficient to observe, that it is a truth known and ac-

every other occasion, where promotion had been solicited as the reward of long services or acknowledged merit, unsupported by parliamentary influence. The young gentleman alluded to is certainly a valuable acquisition to the service, and will do honour to his country, but his preferment was too rapid, and the cause of it too glaring, to escape censure or observation.

The full deposit, however, of his brother's apostacy had not yet been paid: he had other expectations, or perhaps *demands*, on the minister; and, after some trifling evolutions in the ministerial ranks, we beheld his lordship at the admiralty-board, arrogant without authority, and vain of an opportunity of signing orders and instructions, which officers of superior rank and merit were to obey.

Poverty may sometimes tempt, and ambition seduce, men to give up their principles and opinion; but no instance can be produced, in the annals of history, in which so uniform and positive a disregard to truth and decency appears, as in the public conduct of Lord Mulgrave, which is as without excuse as it is beyond example. No miracle has been performed on the president of the marine department, to make him either more *honest* or more *intelligent* in his office, nor has he changed his measures; yet his lordship, in defiance of his former sentiments, and in the face of the world, declares him to be equal in every respect to the important duties of his office, and to have done more for the honour and security of his country, than any of his predecessors. How, in the name of wonder, are we to account for this impudent contradiction and inconsistency, but in the peculiar audacity of the right honourable commoner, and the notorious venality which pervades and disgraces the senate?

How long an insulted people will continue to submit to this indecent mockery of a representation, and confide their liberties with men of such character and principles, is a question which prescience alone can decide; but that a speedy and spirited exertion on their part is become necessary, is a truth which no one will be hardy enough to dispute, when he seriously considers the proceedings of this reign, from the commencement of Lord Bute's administration to the present time.

knowledge

known by political writers of all denominations, and that the difficulty of preventing this dishonourable traffic between the prince and the senate, has in a manner reconciled, or at least rendered us indifferent to an evil, which our ancestors had not capacity or prudence to prevent ; but however defective the constitution may have been transmitted to us, however liable it may be to abuses, the greater and the more evident is the obligation in us to guard its vulnerable parts, and to secure it from the attacks of secret or avowed enemies. The authority which has been exercised in this reign over the representatives of the people, is not only incompatible with the spirit of a free government, but directly contrary to the particular obligations of a British sovereign, indebted to the generosity of the people alone for the elevation of his family to the regal dignity.

From the exercise of this assumed authority an infinity of mischief may proceed, and against which it behoves us to act with decency, indeed, but at the same time with dignity and vigour. To avert the mischief from, perhaps, the present generation, it behoves us to be vigilant and resolute ; and the necessity of vigilance and resolution on our parts is sufficiently obvious, when we recollect the measures which have been adopted, and the violence which has been offered, sometimes under the sanction of law, and sometimes in defiance of it, by the confidential servants of the crown. Our own immediate safety, independent of our obligations to posterity,

requires public affociations for the security of public liberty ; and though it may neither be absolutely just nor expedient, at this moment, to withdraw the trust which we have delegated, yet it is requisite that we should watch the conduct of ministers and of parliament with extreme caution, and no longer suffer the one to *invade*, nor the other to *betray*, those rights, which it is the duty of both to nourish and protect.

At a period, like the present, big with danger and with difficulty, it is incumbent, not only to speak out with freedom and with boldness, but to travel back to the commencement of this reign, and to discover, if possible, the original source of those streams of corruption which have poisoned the fountain of virtue and public spirit.

It will be equally painful and difficult, if not dangerous, considering the spirit of the times, to enquire into the real causes of all the calamities in which we are involved ; but dangerous, difficult, and painful as the task may be, it is now become a matter of duty and necessity, and we can no longer answer it to ourselves or to our country, to remain silent and unconcerned under the circumstances of our present situation. In order to investigate this subject with that justice and precision which it deserves, it will be necessary to go back to that period of grandeur and of national felicity, in which our dominion and fame were established in the four quarters of the habitable globe—a period in which
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our victorious troops returned in triumph from the extremities of the eastern and western hemispheres, and rendered us at once the envy and admiration of the world. France, after having lost the most valuable of her sugar islands, the whole of her oriental possessions, and all Canada; her forces, by sea and land either vanquished or reduced to the humiliating condition of acting only on the defensive, prevailed upon Spain to espouse her cause; but it was our pride and our security to have a minister, at that time, who was equal to the task of conducting us through all difficulties, and surmounting all obstacles. It is, indeed, true, that Mr. Pitt involved us in an enormous debt, the weight of which we feel very severely at this moment; but if that great statesman had been left to conclude a war which he alone had been able to conduct, and which he had directed with so much advantage to his country and honour to himself, there is no doubt but his peace would have been adequate to it in every respect, and that it would have done equal credit to his patriotism and abilities. To be sensible of what we have lost, it will be necessary to recite what we had gained. In the year 1762, we were in possession of the entire continent of America, from Pensacola to Hudson's Bay, the East and West-Indies, and an uninterrupted commerce with the known world, the protectors of Portugal, and complete masters of the sea—The vigilance of our cruisers had almost destroyed the maritime trade of our prostrate enemies, and the very little which remained to France was scarce deserving of the

name of commerce. In this situation was Great-Britain, when France and Spain, exhausted, disgraced, and defeated, in Europe, Asia, and America, sued to her for peace.

The negotiation should have had for its principal object an indemnity from future attacks, an indemnity which might have been insisted upon and obtained, as it was in our power to have dictated terms worthy of the conquests we had made ; but the avidity with which the overtures for an accommodation were accepted at St. James's, and the indecent alacrity with which we agreed to treat with the courts of Versailles and Madrid, gave our vanquished foes what their combined forces could never have obtained. It is this peace, so inadequate to the war which preceded it, and so incompatible with our interest and security, that has enabled perfidious Gaul to guarantee the independence of our revolted colonies, and to menace us with an invasion. An enquiry into the causes of this ruinous and dishonourable peace, may perhaps enable us to judge more perfectly of the characters of the men who managed and concluded it, and it may also direct posterity in their opinions of a prince, who, succeeding to the empire of a great nation, at the very moment in which she had almost attained the summit of human glory, could give up, with unconcern, the many advantages which had been obtained at the expence of so much blood and treasure, and expose himself to future insult and danger. Historians, at the distance of a century, in

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compiling the annals of this reign, may perhaps reproach the sovereign with having ascended the throne under prejudices unfavourable to the constitutional rights of his subjects, and with sentiments incompatible with the obligations of a limited monarch, and, that being more intent on *domestic* than *foreign* conquest, he was anxious to obtain a peace at all events, that he might be more at leisure to carry his designs into execution. These suggestions, erroneous as they certainly are, will undoubtedly receive considerable support from the character of the man to whom the important charge of his education had been confided.

The Earl of Bute, under whose care his Majesty had been placed in early life, had neither a capacity equal to the task of instructing a prince destined to govern a warlike and commercial nation, nor a disposition to render himself even tolerable to those with whom he was likely, from his situation, to be connected; and writers, a century hence, will be apt to judge of the views and expectations of the sovereign, more from the characters of those who were connected with him in his infancy, and who possessed his confidence in maturer life, than from his own particular conduct, which, upon most occasions, must have been regulated by the established laws of the kingdom, or, at least, tempered by a real or an *affected* respect to the prejudices of the people, which it is neither prudent nor safe to violate or offend. It is, however, to be lamented, that the character of a prince, amiable and respectable in private life, will hereafter be drawn from that of

an unworthy favourite, to whom he was perhaps more attached from habit than from inclination, and to whom he is indebted for all the disorders of his reign. Gloomy and austere in private life, despotic in the management of his family even to oppression, and averse, from pride, to that ease and familiarity which at once sweeten and distinguish domestic society, the Earl of Bute was called forth, if not from poverty, at least from obscurity, into active life, to educate a prince in the arts of empire!—The folly of such a choice is of itself without example or excuse ; but when it is seriously recollected how mischievous the effects of such a guardianship may be in its consequences to both prince and people, we must look farther for the cause of so extraordinary an election, than in the mere confidence of a woman,* in his lordship's capacity for so arduous an undertaking. He was indeed conversant in the classics ; but his knowledge being confined to the dead languages qualified him only for the office of a schoolmaster, for which nature also seems to have intended him, if the accident of his birth had not placed him in a situation which gave him rank and consequence, with the power of doing mischief.

His intolerable arrogance to the English nobility, who neglected or refused to pay their court to him, and more especially to those† who had distinguished them-

* The late Princess Dowager of Wales.

† The late Dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, the former of whom he treated with unpardonable rudeness. After having

themselves in facilitating the elevation of the Brunswick family to the British empire ; his being transplanted immediately from the nursery to the cabinet, and taking not only an active part, but absolutely the entire lead, in public affairs, will unquestionably have great weight with posterity, and influence their decisions on the justice as well as policy of the measures of the present reign, and especially when they find it on record, that all the great offices of state, and even the meanest employments in the gift of the crown, were divided among his miserable partizans, or bestowed on his hungry countrymen, who, deserting their own barren and inhospitable mountains, emigrated in legions to the metropolis, and were instantly provided for. The indecent manner in which Mr. Pitt was removed from power, and the whole of his magnificent system of politics changed, for the express purpose of making room for a man so unequal in every respect to succeed him, was more than sufficient to give universal offence. The one was deservedly the idol of the whole nation, while the other, from his morose behaviour to the first characters in the kingdom, and his attachment to principles inimical to the rights of the people, was already become the object of universal detestation and contempt. No wonder, then, that his measures and his principles were arraigned in the

ing agreed to meet him, through the friendly mediation of the late Earl of Eglinton, whose zeal to accomplish a coalition, had no other effect, than to encrease the insolence and demands of the reigning favourite.

senate,

senate, and exposed in print: but the opposition which he met with, served only to advance him in the estimation of his sovereign, who had unhappily been taught to consider every attack on his favourite as an insult offered to himself.* The representatives of the people, who held offices under the crown, and who had the virtue and resolution to refuse an implicit confidence in the fidelity and abilities of this minister, were dismissed without ceremony. This step alone, even under a popular administration, would have excited a general alarm, for however just or expedient the measures of a minister may be, it is a direct violation of the con-

* Augustus Cæsar, who was certainly one of the greatest and happiest of princes, whenever he was informed that his person and edicts were treated with too much freedom in the senate, replied, that *in civitate liberâ linguas quoque civium liberas esse oportere*.

The reader is desired to compare the candor and liberality of the Roman emperor with the conduct of the present time, without regard to the filthy licentiousness of the daily prints, in which ministers and parliament are applauded and abused by vulgar profligate scribblers, who write for hire, and who praise and censure without the smallest respect to truth or decency. It is from the particular conduct of the prince and of his ministers, that we must discover how far freedom of speech in the people is agreeable to the royal temper; and if we find that an opposition, in or out of parliament, to the measures of the latter, is not considered as disaffection to the person of the former, nor a disposition shewn by either of them to punish or resent it, we may then venture to conclude, that as the sovereign has not the power, neither has he the inclination to abolish or controul the right of his subjects investigating the conduct of his government.

stitutional

stitutional rights of the people, and a very dangerous exercise of the prerogative to punish the *senator* in the *officer*, and particularly as that punishment is not only marked, in the first instance, with wantonness and injustice, but seems levelled directly at the very freedom and independence of parliament.

There are very few points on which an assembly, consisting of five hundred persons, promiscuously chosen from as many millions, will be unanimous.

Those truths, which obtain universal and immediate credit with the multitude, must be very simple and obvious indeed; and in politics, where almost as many different opinions prevail as there are individuals, it is folly in the extreme, or something worse, to expect unanimity; but the minister alluded to, did not confine himself merely to *expectation*—It was his interest, as it must be of every man in his situation, to have the concurrence of the whole legislature to his measures, but he disdained to gain their assent on the broad basis of *public utility*. He was superior to the trouble of convincing their understandings, and became *peremptory*. He even proceeded to coercion, and armed with the power of the crown, punished those who opposed him, by dismissing them from their civil or military employments. Here was, in fact, a denial of the right of parliament to dissent from the confidential servants of the prince, or to investigate the justice or policy of their public

conduct; and when we recollect the high authority, under which this right was denied, it must be confessed, that the apprehensions of the people were not ill-founded.*

* When the question of general warrants was brought on in the House of Commons, the honourable Henry Seymour Conway voted against the legality of them, and for that vote he was dismissed from his military command, and told, that the king had no farther command for his services. Neither disaffection to the sovereign, or misconduct as an officer, could be, or even was alledged against him, as the cause of his dismissal. He had faithfully and conscientiously discharged his duty to his constituents in parliament; and this conduct, which ought to have endeared him to the prince, as it did to the nation, was regarded as an attack on the royal prerogative, and punished as severely as the limited power of the crown would admit. This despicable instance of a mean and pitiful revenge proved a disposition to be despotic, without the means of gratifying it.

The question itself was an attempt at despotism; and if the minister had succeeded, we may judge of the rigor and frequency, with which the assumed power would have been exerted, by the intemperance of his resentment to those who voted against it. Our houses at midnight would have been subject to the attacks of armed ruffians, acting under the authority, and at the pleasure of a secretary of state; Newgate and the Tower would have been filled, perhaps, with members from both Houses of Parliament, and their papers exposed to the impertinent curiosity of ministers, clerks, and messengers. This attempt to give additional weight to the crown, is the less excusable, as the constitution has provided very amply for every purpose of fair and legal government: but the dismissal of General Conway, General A'Court, and afterwards of Sir Percy Brett, from their employments, because they voted in the House of Commons against a question of the minister, is such a flagrant act of injustice, that in times less temperate than the present, the resentment of the people would have extended beyond the sacrifice of the minister.

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The partizans of administration will, perhaps, object, that this is an old and beaten path, that it is a subject long since exhausted, and ought to be consigned for ever to oblivion.

These objections, however, are frivolous, as well as unjust, as an attempt in any minister to controul the voice of parliament, should neither be forgotten nor forgiven ; but a principal reason for repeating this circumstance, is merely to illustrate an important truth, which experience hath already confirmed : *That the principles, on which this reign commenced, were faulty, and that there was an unnatural, as well as an impolitic bias, in the education of the PRINCE OF WALES, which has been the source of much subsequent uneasiness to the KING, and of mischief to this kingdom.*

At this time, the Solicitor and Attorney Generals, those ready instruments of tyranny, were called forth as auxiliaries to the vengeance of the minister. Prosecutions were instituted in the courts of justice against authors, printers, and publishers. The powerful arm of authority was raised, not to protect, but to oppress the subject ; and even the sovereign descended to a contest with an individual, who had opposed the favourite.

This extraordinary and disgraceful conduct, so incompatible with the regal dignity, far from intimidating, served only to excite the popular fury ; and Mr. Wilkes, taking the constitution for his guide, had the satisfaction to obtain a glorious

triumph over the whole power and influence of the crown, which had been exerted only to destroy him. The particulars of this singular prosecution, or rather persecution, I trust, will be recorded in a work of greater magnitude and duration than a pamphlet—in the annals of English history. It is sufficient, for the present, to mention this fact, as one of the many instances, in which ministers, in this reign, have attempted to punish those, who have presumed to question their conduct.

It is perhaps more dangerous, than difficult, to state the reasons, which could induce a prince, till that time, revered and beloved by the whole nation, to descend to a warfare with one of his people, and to exert the entire force of his authority, to crush and destroy a man, whose only crime had been *defending the liberty of the subject against illegal violence*. Such an interference in a free state, is not indeed unprecedented, but it is altogether unpardonable. In an absolute monarchy, where the sovereign can say with impunity, *sic volu, sic jubeo*, it may not be very prudent to dispute with him; but in this country, where public measures have been, and, we trust, ever will be, open to the free and impartial discussion of all ranks of men, and more especially of both Houses of Parliament, to whom the discussion of all public measures immediately and constitutionally belongs, it must be matter of equal surprise and indignation, to see the first magistrate descending from his imperial throne, with

with all the rays of royalty collected, to awe his subjects into a blind obedience to his will. Commitments, informations *ex officio*, dismissions from places of trust and profit, the expulsion of obnoxious members from parliament, by means of a corrupt majority, and the whole train of vexatious expedients were in vain exerted, to subdue the steady and manly opposition of a single individual. He triumphed over the ill-directed malice of power, unsupported by law and justice, and exhibited another instance to the world of the animating superiority of our free constitution. By endeavouring to suppress that spirit of freedom, which is the characteristic of this nation, a spirit of jealousy was excited, accompanied by a spirit of resentment, and the press, which had hitherto preserved great good temper, and the strictest decorum, with respect to private characters, broke forth into the wildest extravagance and licentiousness. An attempt to silence it had made it outrageous, and by disputing the moderate and legal exercise of its power, it became hostile and tyrannical to all orders of men :* hence we must account for the daily abuse

* It is as beneath the dignity, as it is distant from the design, of this publication, to descend to a controversy with the numerous daily papers ; but the licentious freedoms which have been taken with the first characters in the state, often unjustly, and always wantonly and malevolently, have long been complained of. The press indeed began to deliver itself with less restraint after the period of Mr. Wilkes's return from Paris, in 1768, than before, but the public conduct of ministers was only canvassed ; no invasion of the domestic repose of individuals

abuse, which we read in the public prints, and for the impunity, which a herd of vagabond scribblers, under the different denominations of editors, essay-writers, and news-collectors, find for the outrages they commit against the domestic repose of individuals, and against which the laws have not provided an ample security. This may be considered as one of the many evils, which have resulted from a wanton and illegal attempt at inordinate power.

But to return. The commencement of the present reign exhibited the most flattering prospect of

was attempted, till lately, when a paper was set up under the management of a man of vulgar and obscure birth, the principal object of which was to discover to the world the mysteries of private life.

Having no character of his own to lose, it was the less likely that he should feel any regard for the character of others. — Neither rank, condition, nor innocence itself, was exempt from his abuse: and even defenceless women found no security in their sex against his unprovoked slander. The athletic arm of the bravo vindicated, upon all occasions, the lawless assassin of reputations; and he literally fought his way from obscurity and indigence, into notice and competency, or rather into affluence, considering his mean origin and necessitous condition. This man, whose chief business hath been to destroy the peace of private families, it is said, has a pension from the state, and whenever a minister, in this country is reduced to the humiliating necessity of employing the basest of mankind to defend his measures and support his administration, by imposing fallacies, evading what he cannot deny, and misrepresenting truth, his cause must be desperate, whatever his designs or his capacity may be, and he becomes an object of our pity more than of our resentment.

future

future happiness and glory. The nation was intemperate in its joy, at seeing a British prince once more in possession of the regal sceptre, and they were confirmed in the favourable sentiments they had formed, by the judges being declared independent, and by a surrender of some other privileges of less consequence, on his ascending the throne.

Princes seldom give up their power, but with reluctance; on the contrary, they are more anxious to extend, than to part with it; and whenever they sacrifice their prerogative, it is for purposes not very favourable to the rights of the people, and which they dare not immediately avow. This voluntary act of generosity, on the part of the prince, was extolled by prostitute writers, as an instance of the extreme veneration, with which he regarded the constitution, and as an indisputable testimony of his patriotism and moderation.

It was indeed specious, and very little pains were required to give it weight with the multitude, whose easy credulity was imposed upon, and who, in return, rewarded their sovereign with the most unlimited confidence. But it did not occur to them, that the office of chancellor, by affording hereditary honours, held out a temptation, against which few minds, and especially weak minds, are proof, and that it was a *trap-door*, through which the judges were to fall, whenever they discovered a disposition

tion to oppose the crown;* neither did they recollect, that the judges are usually selected from the law officers of state, and that benefits *conferred*, exact *favours* in return.

This act of apparent generosity, which afforded no additional, or at least no important security against the power of the crown, was unquestionably a popular measure, and extremely well calculated to bespeak, and afterwards to impose on the credulity of the nation, if an inglorious peace, an encrease of taxes, and an extension of the excise laws, had not immediately followed this impious mockery of patriotism, and exposed the principles and object of the new system of politics, which had been adopted in direct contradiction to his Majesty's positive declaration to his first parliament.† “*The present cri-*

* Lord Chief Justice Pratt was made chancellor, and created a peer, soon after he had discharged Mr. Wilkes, and declared the warrant of his commitment illegal. He has now no more than a solitary vote in parliament, which the new system of politics has taken care to render of no consequence, when opposed to the measures of government. Lord Mansfield, more artful, and less honest, has repeatedly rejected the seals, from a suspicion, perhaps, that the moment he accepted of them, he would lose his power and consequence. He therefore continues chief justice of the court of king's bench, dictates to ministers, provides for his family and dependants as he pleases, decides, upon all occasions, against the liberty of the subject, and is accomplishing the ruin of this country with all possible expedition; while no authority can controul him but that of the people, whose patience, or rather apathy, seems to increase in a double proportion to the injuries and insults they receive from him.

† Vide the King's Speech.

“ tical and difficult conjuncture, has made this loss”
 (the late king) *“ the more sensible, as he was the great*
“ support of THAT system, by which ALONE the liber-
“ ties of Europe, and the weight and influence of these
“ kingdoms can be PRESERVED, and give life to mea-
“ sures conducive to those important ends.”

Tumultuous plaudits, arising from sentiments of loyalty and affection in a grateful people to a native prince, were no longer heard. A doubtful silence prevailed throughout the British dominions, till the illegal seizure of Mr. Wilkes finally decided the hitherto equivocal conduct of the minister, and excited a general alarm. Neither the unwelcome reception it met with from all ranks of men, the universal clamor it occasioned, nor the solemn condemnation, which it publicly received from a virtuous and intrepid judge, could abate the furious resentment of the favourite.

A message, replete with anger and duplicity, was delivered, in 1763, from the King to the Commons, by the chancellor of the Exchequer, in expectation of obtaining a vote of censure on this selected object for royal and ministerial vengeance, and the Commons, in obedience to the imperial wish, did all that they dared to do, or that an enraged minister could with decency require. This act of oppression, notwithstanding the countenance with which it was honored by parliament, was regarded as an experiment on the temper of the people, as a bold attempt in favour of despotism,

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but it was too violent to pass unnoticed or unpelled.

It is possible, that we may be betrayed into a surrender of our liberties, but the spirit of this country is not yet so reduced as to admit of their being taken by a *coup de main*. The mode of attack was therefore instantly changed, and instead of *force*, recourse was had to *art*. It was thought easier to *corrupt* than to *subdue*, and a *venal parliament* would answer every purpose of a *standing army*, without being either so expensive, obnoxious, or dangerous.

Seats in the House of Commons, which before the Revolution in 1688, were only solicited, and seldom contested, have gradually encreased their consequence, because they have been found *profitable*; even men with a capacity only to *affirm* and *deny*, find a ready market for the now valuable monosyllables of *Yes* and *No*, and avow themselves pensioners to the minister.* Boroughs are sought after

* Among the many who have deserted the interests of their constituents, and devoted themselves to the service of the minister, there is no one perhaps less excusable than Mr. Gibbon, who, with an ample independence, and with a very considerable share of literary reputation, could abandon the cause of his country, which he had espoused; revolt from the whigs, with whom he had been connected, and in whose principles he had been educated; and give the lie direct to his own conduct and writings. It is, however, to be hoped, that he will favour us with a History of the Decline of the
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after with avidity, and those which remain unfold to government, are grasped at by men of low birth, who, having amassed fortunes in India, and desirous of obliterating all remembrance of their original meanness, devote themselves to the ministry, as the most effectual means of obtaining those honorary distinctions, which never fail to dazzle and amuse the vulgar.

The extraordinary inundation of wealth from the East, has contributed to encrease the venality and corruption of parliament beyond the example of former ages. Country gentlemen, who had a natural and hereditary interest in the boroughs which they represented, were attacked by those exotics, and unable to contend against the profusion of their unprincipled opponents, were compelled either to solicit the protection of ministry, or to give up their seats : all this contributed to strengthen the power of the crown, and to extend its influence over the whole representative body. But this was not the only evil, which it occasioned. It acquired an influence over our manners, and even effected a considerable change in them, of which notice will be taken more particularly hereafter.

The facility, with which immense fortunes were obtained in the East, held out irresistible

the British Empire, since he exhibits a mortifying instance of *the image of our free constitution being no longer preserved with even a decent reverence.*—Vide the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon, Esq.

temptations to the necessitous and avaricious ; and while Indostan could produce a roupee, there was an annual export and import of adventurers.

This traffic, which was carried on for a series of years, brought considerable wealth into the nation, and produced infinite mischief. Debauched by the magnificence of Eastern manners, these gentry, on their return, affected to despise the wholesome, sobriety and frugality of their native country. The most sumptuous habitations and entertainments, equally destitute of taste and œconomy, were become absolutely necessary, and their dress and pleasures were equally expensive. The honest pride of the old English nobility was mortified, as being eclipsed, nor could they submit to have their consequence lessened, and sometimes superseded, in the country where they had been always respected, and especially, by men who had probably been domestics in their very families. Unwilling to be undone, they were seduced into expences, beyond their ability to support. These unequal contests so imprudent and destructive, frequently terminated in the sale of their estates, which were purchased by those Asiatic plunderers, who had set them an example of extravagance, for the purpose, perhaps, of reducing them to poverty and ruin. The country-gentlemen became alarmed for their property and influence ; the middle and lower orders of men were aggrieved by the advanced price of provisions, which the most wanton

ton profusion and waste had occasioned, while all of them, without exception, imitated, to the very extent of their incomes and credit, the extravagance which they reprobated and condemned.

No wonder then, that property shifted hands, and that indigence followed close upon the heels of folly and dissipation. Public spirit in some, and envy and resentment in others, at last promoted a parliamentary enquiry into the conduct of the most conspicuous of those who had amassed princely fortunes. Committees were appointed by the House of Commons, who certainly did justice to the trust reposed in them, by discovering a series of unexampled villanies, which called loudly for national vengeance. So flagrant and enormous was the guilt of the delinquents, that even government shrunk from them in the moment of trial and of danger, and artfully avoided giving them that countenance, which it wished to do. The Commons, however, more merciful, or less scrupulous, to the astonishment of truth, and the whole world, stood between the culprits, and the punishment due to their crimes, and consigned their own memories to everlasting infamy !

The ghosts of thirty thousand Gentoos, who perished by a famine, artfully created by the refined cruelty of a European,* intent only on fraud and rapine

* The Gentoos, confiding in the doctrines of Pythagoras, believe in the metempsychosis, and live entirely on vegetables, and par-

rapine, with that of Omichund, who fell a victim to his own credulity, and the inhuman artifices of a man,* who had waded thro' blood to riches and to power, pleaded in vain for retribution: a venal senate, lost to every sense of dignity and virtue, exculpated the affluent authors of these barbarities, and became partners in their guilt! The decision which they gave, so obviously unjust, exhibits another melancholy proof of the corruption of the

particularly on rice, which is their principal support. They are the most virtuous and inoffensive people in the world, and perhaps the only nation in which that admirable moral maxim of "*do unto others as we would have others do unto us,*" is observed with religious fidelity; but the simplicity of their manners could not preserve them from the rapacity of European adventurers, who, for the last century, have taken infinite pains to impoverish and exterminate them. Among those of our countrymen who have taken an active part in these merciless tragedies, and disgraced us in Indostan, is a Mr. Sykes, who, from the humble condition of a menial servant in England, emigrated to India, where he acquired both wealth and power. It was the ingenuity of this man, who contrived a monopoly of rice, by which he was enabled to return to Europe with a fortune of half a million sterling, stained with the innocent blood of thirty thousand of his fellow-creatures, whom his unfeeling avarice had compelled to die of hunger.

* The death of Omichund is an authenticated fact, the author of which, after having escaped the vengeance of his country, and withstood the test of a parliamentary enquiry, could not withstand the scrutinizing test of his own conscience, but fell, unpitied even by sycophants and dependents, a miserable victim to remorse and despair, by terminating, with his own hand, a life which had excited at once the odium and astonishment of mankind.

times, and of the ill effects arising from the extraordinary wealth, which flowed in upon us from India, since it enabled a few despicable individuals to bribe a majority of the representative body, and by that means obtain a guilty triumph over the justice and laws of their country.* With a parliament composed of such characters, so venal and so indigent, what may we not apprehend? Every mischief is to be dreaded; and when we hear those very men; Those pensioned confederates against liberty and the constitution, insisting at once on the *infallibility* and *omnipotence* of parliament; and the people as readily subscribing to both these dogmas, what security have we against the treachery of an obsequious senate, but in the virtue of the prince, or the timidity and incapacity of his ministers to enslave us?†

To

* The quantum which was given to each member who voted in the last parliament in favour of the Asiatic plunderers can be best ascertained by Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, to whose ingenious management the defence of the late Lord Clive was entirely submitted, and to whose political conduct and principles the people of this country have already many obligations, and which, it is hoped, they will not forget to acknowledge and discharge.

† The following letter, extracted from the parliamentary debates in the year 1701, and compared with the conduct of the present time, is a proof of the great change which has taken place in the minds of the people, as well as of the zeal and intrepidity with which our ancestors acted whenever the constitution was attacked. It was accompanied with fifteen articles of grievances, and eight for the approbation of the commons. The bold

To proceed regularly with the innumerable facts, in the order of time as they happened, would swell these remarks into a volume ; we will therefore pass over the general proceedings of ministers, since the Earl of Bute was driven, by the public voice, from the councils of his sovereign, as well as over the particular conduct of individuals, who have distinguished and taken to themselves the name of the “ *King’s Friends*.” We shall also pass over a series of years, in which nothing remarkable or important

bold and decisive language in which it is written, proves that virtue and patriotism were then regarded as obligations of duty, and must raise a blush in the present generation, for their want of unanimity and principle, at a time when judges have dared to twist and expound the laws to oppress the subject, and when ministers, under the pretext of *expediency* and *state necessity*, violate Magna Charta, and trample on the constitution, without ceremony, and almost without reserve.

“ *Mr. Speaker,*

“ *The inclosed memorial you are charged with in the behalf of many thousands of the good people of England. There is neither Popish, Jacobite, seditious, court, nor party interest concerned in it, but honesty and truth. You are COMMANDED, by two hundred thousand Englishmen, to deliver it to the house of Commons, and to inform them that it is no banter, but serious truth, and a serious regard to it is expected. Nothing but justice and their duty is required of them ; and it is required by those who have both a RIGHT to require and a power to COMPEL—viz.—THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND—We could have come to the house strong enough to have obliged them to hear us ; but we have avoided any tumults, not desiring to embroil, but to save, our country. If you refuse to communicate it to them, you will have cause, in a short time, to repent it.*

Our name is

LEGION, and we are MANY.”

To Robert Harley, Esq.

Speaker of the House of Commons.

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hath occurred, in order to come immediately to the present administration, whose measures have deranged the politics of all Europe, and given birth to a new empire, which bids fair to dictate laws to the rest of the world.

When it was his Majesty's pleasure to honour the present ministers with his royal confidence, we were in possession of our American colonies, in profound peace, and enjoying an uninterrupted commerce with the known nations of the earth. The revenues were encreased, and the riches, which flowed in upon us from all parts of the globe, ought to have been applied to the discharge of the heavy debts, which had been contracted in the preceding wars, and which would certainly have had such an application under an administration, directed by principles of common prudence and common honesty ; but there were obligations of another nature to be discharged, and other pursuits, for which the overplus of public money was required, notwithstanding the parade of œconomy which was made, and the reform which actually took place in the expences of the household * of the sovereign, as if
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* The frivolous arrangements of the lord steward, Talbot, in the royal kitchen, and other departments of the household, were more suitable to the limited circumstances of an insignificant tradesman, than to the ample revenue of a British prince. From this œconomy in domestic matters, we were authorised to hope that it would have been exercised in more important affairs ; but the recent demands of the crown, and the liberal supplies of the
F commons,

a singular and permanent system of frugality had been seriously adopted. It was reasonable to have supposed, that the revenues, which had been found equal to the enormous expences of a great military establishment, in time of war, would have been adequate to every exigency of government, in time of profound peace. The growing family of his Majesty indeed demanded some extraordinary provision out of the public purse, but not sufficient to encrease the burthen of the people, who had sustained so chearfully and manfully the load of taxes, which had been levied to support a war in every quarter of the globe, against the most formidable powers in Europe; whether it was profusion, or incapacity in the several ministers, which succeeded each other in the early part of this reign,* or whether the insatiate rapacity of the Commons demanded more of mini-

commons, prove that we have been insulted and amused with notions of frugality, while the grossest profusion and most wanton extravagance have prevailed though every department of the state.

* It is worthy of observation, that, for the first eight years after his Majesty ascended the throne, every gazette announced to the world, either a new minister, or a change in the first offices of state. Whether this proceeded from a natural inconstancy of temper in the sovereign, or from the difficulty which he met with in finding a set of men absolutely and totally devoted to his royal will, is a circumstance which I shall leave to be collected from the general tenor of his government. It is certain, that the whole peerage has been ransacked for ministers, and the final choice which his Majesty has at last been graciously pleased to make, no longer marks his designs as equivocal.

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sters, for supporting them with their votes, than ministers, or rather the nation could afford, is a question of very little import. It will be readily acknowledged, that we have had ministers unequal to the duty required of them, as well as wanton and lavish in the expenditure of the public money, and that we have also had representatives, who have bargained away their honour, violated their trust, and entailed mischiefs on their country, which even time can never repair: who have even ascertained the value of votes between themselves and their constituents, as well as between themselves and ministers, and who have meant nothing more by coming into parliament, than to aggrandize themselves and families. So scandalous a deviation from the spirit of our constitution, so infamous a prostitution of character, and such a total contempt of all decency, must endanger the very existence of our free government, and in the end destroy the credit of parliament with the body of the people, who, enraged at the abuse of so noble, so magnificent, and so independent an institution, may be tempted in a moment to abolish them entirely, and confide altogether in the integrity of the prince, rather than in four or five hundred mercenaries, under the denomination of lords and commons

The recruiting of an exhausted treasury, and providing for the exigencies of a future war, were considerations to which our ministers would never condescend. To provide for the present moment, re-

gardless of distant events, and even of almost immediate consequences, was the ultimate object of their wishes, and very often the utmost extent of their abilities. The business of one administration was to undo what had been done by the preceding one, and the contemptible animosities of individuals were pitifully blended with a disapprobation of public measures. This miserable and wretched policy took its mischievous rise from the instability of the sovereign, as well as the incapacity of his ministers. They were but a moment, as it were, in office, and in that moment something was to be done—Laws were enacted in one session and repealed the next, and in this slovenly and disgraceful manner were public matters conducted, when an event, which took place in the year 1765, gave a turn to British politics, and prepared the way for the revolution which has since happened.

It excited the clamor of thirteen colonies against the authority of the mother-country, and instructing them, for the first time, how to oppose the power of parliament with success, furnished them with an idea of independence, which they have since improved and established, beyond our ability to destroy. The event, alluded to, is the attempt which was made to derive a revenue from America; but the mode in which it was demanded being considered as unconstitutional, the whole continent united, and, with equal anger and indecency, declared taxation by England an outrage against their inherent, as well

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as against their chartered rights. The timidity of the ministry at home afforded impunity to riots and disorders abroad. The representatives of majesty were menaced and insulted by mobs, and the dignity of government sacrificed to the insolent claims of a tumultuous rabble.

A correspondence was established from Boston to Charles-Town, for the better defence of public liberty, in which men of all principles and persuasions engaged without distinction or reserve, and in which the gloomy and selfish fanatics of Massachusetts Bay, and the northern colonies, neither felt nor expressed a reluctance to join with the volatile and dissipated inhabitants of Carolina and Virginia—The rigid Presbyterian, the pious disciples of Whitfield, the bigot Catholic, and the Deist, associated together, and, forgetting, or rather abandoning, those religious sentiments which had hitherto separated and taught them to regard each other as enemies, united as brethren, and unanimously adopted one creed in politics, to the truth of which they have chearfully subscribed and adhered. So extraordinary an union of three millions of people, whose interests and whose manners were so essentially different, must either have proceeded from an ill-judged exertion of illegal power, or from an imbecility in government itself.—Be that as it may, the stamp act, which had excited this furious opposition, was repealed, and peace, without confidence, restored to the enraged provinces; for care was taken to inform them, that
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Great-Britain considered it as her indispensable right to bind her colonies in all cases whatsoever.

This frivolous declaration, which proved nothing but our vanity and impotence, instead of regaining us the confidence and affection of America, suggested to her the necessity of providing against any future attacks, and taught her to watch, and examine with the most scrupulous accuracy, every act of the British senate which bore the most distant affinity to her laws and commerce. Conscious of her own power, which she had recently felt and exerted, she held a language and observed a conduct much less respectable than what she had hitherto done; yet, notwithstanding the insolence of the one, and the pusillanimity of the other, the respective commercial interests of both countries preserved a tolerable harmony between them, till the folly or wickedness of the present minister revived the right of taxation, at the distance of eight years after it had been acknowledged and abandoned as impracticable, and after the industry and policy of the whole continent had been constantly employed to obtain the means of repelling by force any attempt that might again be made on the property of America.

Surely if it was impracticable to enforce obedience to an act of parliament in the year 1765, it was much more so in the year 1773, when exclusive of the encrease of eight years population to the inhabitants, they must have received considerable sup-

port from the numerous emigrations from Germany, Scotland, Ireland, and England; besides, the alarm which had been imprudently given, and more imprudently silenced, at the former period, had put her on her guard, and it was not by negotiations, remonstrances, and petitions that she intended, or indeed could hope to resist a second attempt: it must be decided by force of arms, and an experiment of the national strength, on such an occasion, and for no object of permanent, or even of momentary, utility, reflected very little credit either on the capacity or humanity of the minister. Coercion, however, was resolved upon, at all events, and acts upon acts were passed by parliament, to intimidate men who no longer acknowledged its authority, and who had appealed to Heaven and the sword in defence of that freedom which they considered as their birth-right. In the first instance, it was called the minister's war; it afterwards became the war of parliament, and again reverted to the minister, who disclaimed it; and it is now become a war of prerogative. The most zealous in recommending hostilities, for the purpose of plundering and dragooning an unarmed peasantry, were the great law officers of the crown—those legal counsellors, who held that law is liberty, and that America had rejected liberty by disputing law—Such was the curious and decisive logic of Lord Mansfield, that great law general, who declared ~~we~~ *They* had passed the Rubicon, and if we did not cut their ~~throats of the Americans~~ *isn't* they would cut ours. It is to the iniquity and injustice of these sanguinary councils

councils that we owe the dismemberment of the British empire, and the calamities of a foreign as well as of a civil war. To the cruelty and injustice of drawing the sword were added insult and calumny. Both houses of legislature were prodigal in their abuse of the Americans, whom they stigmatised as cowards and blockheads.* Allowing the stigma to be just, it is a reflection on the wisdom and magnanimity of this country to have sued to those very cowards and blockheads for a peace, after a contest of four years, in which the strength of this country had been in vain exerted to subjugate them. The minister had forgot, or, at least, he affected to forget,

* Lord Sandwich, in one house, and General Grant, in the other, were the first to brand the Americans as cowards and as blockheads. The former summoned the ghost of Sir Peter Warren from its peaceful mansion, in support of his illiberal reproach; while the latter declared, that, with five hundred men, he would march from one extreme of the continent to the other.

These were the opinions of men high in the royal confidence of their sovereign; opinions abhorrent to reason, philosophy, and the nature of things; but which were received with avidity, because they were consonant with the sanguinary and obdurate temper of a man, who seemed desirous of exchanging the ancient and venerable motto of *Dieu et mon droit*, for the more classical and pleasing one of *sic volo sic jubeo*. Had either of these prostitute senators consulted Horace, they would have learnt, that the lion could not beget the lamb, nor the bird of Jove the timid dove.——

*Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis
Est in juvenis, est in equis patrum
Virtus; nec imbellum feroces
Progenerant aquilæ columbam.*

the.

the haughty insolence with which he had presumed to boast, in the face of parliament and of the world, that he would have America prostrate at his feet, and would hear of nothing but unconditional submission.

The commons were deceived into an expectation of deriving a revenue from the colonies. This was the promise of the minister, and, on the faith of that promise, he was supported by some, while others, who had enlisted into his service, were compelled to give their countenance, or lose what they deemed of more consequence than a faithful discharge of their duty to their country and their constituents.

At the distance of two years, the minister came forward, and confessed that a revenue from America was visionary,* and even if it was not, that it would never be an object worth attending to. "*What then do we contend for?*" says parliament. For your supremacy, it was said—" *Aye, the supremacy of parliament?*"—Most certainly, it was replied; and you must not relinquish it.—"*To be sure not,*" said the commons; "*We will therefore give you money and men, and do you preserve us our supremacy.*"—Money and men were accordingly voted and sent to America with all possible expedition; but it was afterwards discovered that a union of any kind with America, was of more importance than this supremacy, and it was accordingly given up with as little ceremony as the prospect of a revenue had been.

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Commis-

* Lord George Germaine.

Commissioners * were then appointed and dispatched ; but it was found as difficult to accomplish this desirable union, as it had been to derive a revenue, or to maintain the supremacy of parliament.—“ *What now remains to be done?* ” exclaims the house of
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* Another instance of the wisdom of administration appears in their choice of commissioners to restore peace and unanimity to a distracted and divided empire.

Without offending either of the gentlemen appointed to this important office, we may venture to declare that neither of them possessed that degree of consequence and weight which mankind are insensibly led to annex to the solemnity and dignity of the characters with which they were invested. Lord Carlisle was only known to us as an amiable young nobleman of engaging manners in private life, who had contrived to injure his patrimony, by an imprudent, tho’ fashionable, attention to the pleasures and dissipation of the age. He had as yet taken no active or conspicuous part in parliament, nor discovered either a disposition for business, or abilities for negotiation. He had, indeed, married a daughter of a peer, who, besides being president of the council, was at the head of a powerful faction : but this could only promote his appointment to an office ; it could not possibly qualify him for the duties of it. Mr. Johnstone was as little likely to impress the world with any favourable sentiments of himself, as his noble colleague ; he had not even the advantage of a right honourable birth to boast of ; and it was not very probable that any confidence would be placed in a man who had so recently deserted his party and accepted of an office, the honour and emoluments of which were more immediately the objects of his attention, than a wish to re-unite the two countries. As to Mr. Eden, he had combated those evils with success to which the youngest sons of gentlemen of small estates are exposed, and triumphed over every disadvantage arising from indifferent circumstances, by the mere strength of talents, aided by great application and a serious turn for business. From a student in the Temple, where he had devoted himself to the law for his subsistence, he was called into the more public walk of politics, and thought himself amply provided for, when he was appointed

commons?—Oh! says the minister, I will now shew them no mercy: they have forfeited every pretension to our lenity; a different mode of war shall be immediately adopted; we have resources in abundance, if you will only be unanimous, and not parsimonious, and America shall yet submit to unconditional submission. Here we find his lordship, after having, like a Roman gladiator, traversed the whole circus, returning to the very point from which he set out on his hostile career.—The contest became more serious, and the event of it still more uncertain, from the part which France avowed.

an under secretary to the late Lord Suffolk, who brought him into parliament: he afterwards married a daughter of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot, and that completed his good fortune; but his merit and rapid rise in life did not, and indeed could not give him that consequence which the novelty and object of the commission required.

On so important an occasion, could not the minister discover, in the two houses of parliament, three men, from whose public characters there was reason to expect they would have been honoured with a conference, if not with the confidence of congress?—Did he not know that a Grafton, a Richmond, a Shelburne, or a Camden, whose public conduct have commanded respect, would have been heard, and perhaps successfully heard, in America; or was his sovereign unwilling to confide in men, who, considering their obligations to their country as paramount to every other, had defended their own rights, with those of their fellow-subjects, and endeavoured to get at and crush the *canker-worm* which has been gnawing the dyke of the constitution, to let in an inundation of power?—Were these the secret reasons for which rank, dignity of character, integrity, and abilities were overlooked or disregarded, and three individuals invited from obscurity and sent to the western world?—Or was it the marriage of two of them, and the apostasy of the third, that secured them a preference which has dishonoured them, and lost the nation for ever the final opportunity of an accommodation with America?

Parliament having abandoned all prospect of deriving a revenue from America, and even the folly of contending for supremacy, the minister was again asked what was to be done, now that France had joined with America? “ *How shall we be able to withstand their united force, after finding ourselves so inadequate to the task of subduing one of them?* ”

—Nothing so easy, it was replied. Give me your confidence and your money, and I will conduct you through the tempest.—It was agreed; money and men were again voted with the most unbounded liberality, great naval and other military preparations were made, and a fleet of ships, half rotten and ill manned, were collected together from Plymouth, where they ought to have remained, from its vicinity to Brest, and assembled at Portsmouth, that the sovereign might be accommodated with one of the most magnificent sights in the universe, as near the metropolis as possible. This fleet, which ought to have been sent to sea immediately, was detained at Portsmouth for a considerable time, and the fishery on the banks of Newfoundland, was destroyed by American privateers,* which even menaced and plundered the different harbours, while the force destined to protect them, remained inactive at Spithead with a large convoy of merchants’ ships,† waiting the departure of Vice Admiral Montague, who had been kept from his station, and the service of his country, for the more important purpose of amusing his Majesty.

* Nor has Newfoundland been better protected this year.

† By this wanton delay several of the merchants were almost ruined, and lost the advantage of an entire season, by arriving too late for the fishery.

The grand fleet, however, was at last permitted to sail in quest of that of France, and, in order that the whole of the minister's conduct should be uniformly consistent, the commander in chief had an *admiral* and a *captain* * under him of different principles, and from whom neither harmony nor support could be expected. What rendered this appointment yet more extraordinary, was their being members of that board from whence the commanding officer received his

* Lord Mulgrave, not content with a seat in parliament and at the admiralty, insisted on keeping the command of his ship (the Ardent) in which he was indulged; and this indulgence was the more criminal, as several veteran officers, of experienced bravery and unquestionable merit, had resigned the sweets of domestic society, and resorting to the metropolis with an offer of their services, were loitering about the admiralty, at a great expence, in expectation of employment, while his lordship continued in commission, and was even sent to sea, under the command of Mr. Keppel, with whose orders he certainly was acquainted, and which he, as well as Sir H. Palliser, perhaps had signed. The impropriety, to say nothing of the indelicacy, of sending out two men of subordinate rank under a commander in chief, of whose conduct in every particular they were enabled, and probably *directed*, to judge, is of itself sufficiently reprehensible; but when we recollect the subsequent conduct of those very officers, and particularly that of the baronet,* it is no unreasonable conjecture to suppose, that they both had appointments on that occasion very different, and not quite so honourable, as those which they ostensibly held, and this conjecture derives no inconsiderable support from the novelty of the admiralty-board sending two of its members to sea, and one of them very distant

* Sir Hugh Palliser, notwithstanding he is recorded as having preferred a *false* and *malicious* charge against his superior officer; notwithstanding he is execrated by every honest man in the navy, and that no admiral will go to sea with him, has had the *modesty*, within these two months, to write *officially* to the admiralty for employment!

his instructions, and which had perhaps been signed by them; and when the necessity of unanimity in all public undertakings, and especially in military expeditions is considered, it will be difficult to excuse the first Lord of the Admiralty, for sending men of opposite principles and expectations to sea together, on a service of such consequence to the state.*

Had Sir Hugh Palliser had the command of that fleet, there is no doubt, from his acknowledged bravery, but he would have acquitted himself with honour, but envious of Mr. Keppel, to whom he was subordinate, and apprehensive of his obtaining all the applause, he denied him the assistance which was required in a critical moment, and deprived this country, perhaps, of the only opportunity she may ever have of destroying, or

in rank from the commander in chief, and under the particular command of his colleague in office. It is not usual, nor is it prudent, to impart the orders to any one in the fleet under which the commander in chief acts, for reasons too obvious to be repeated. and this maxim was invariably observed in the late war, when all our military operations were founded in wisdom, and attended with success: but the purposes for which this rule has been recently violated need no explanation; Mr. Keppel is not the only officer whom administration have insulted and endeavoured to disgrace, nor are Sir Hugh Palliser and Lord Mulgrave the only instruments whom they have employed to criminate and defame those whom they could not deceive or corrupt.

* By the repeated additions, which have been recently made to the list of admirals, it is reasonable to suppose, that these promotions were occasioned by the old officers being unfit for service; yet one of the oldest, and most infirm, has been selected for the command of that fleet, on which the fate of this country may be said to depend!

at least, of checking the naval power of France.* After this unhappy event, the fleet returned, not indeed disgraced, as has been said, but very far from being victorious, and soon after the commissioners arrived from New-York, without being able to obtain even the honour of a conference, and one of them marked with the odium and censure of Congress.† Their arrival was immediately followed by that of an express of Dominica being taken

* That this must have been the motive of Sir Hugh Palliser is evident from the subsequent conduct of that gentleman, in deliberately, and at the distance of five months, exhibiting five different charges against Mr. Keppel, all of which were aimed at his life and character, and which the accuser must have been conscious at the time were false and malicious. The iniquity of such a proceeding is without excuse, and proves his heart to be malignant and rancorous against those to whom it conceives an enmity or dislike. As to his confederates of inferior rank, the captains, the lieutenants, midshipmen and sailors, who, excluded the society of the honest part of the community, have since mingled together, they are beneath our notice, except at the moment : they have been rewarded and promoted, and that perhaps was more the object of their wishes, and the cause of their perjuries, than a desire that an innocent and brave officer should be disgraced, and suffer an ignominious death.

† Governor Johnstone, from a supercilious confidence in the superiority of his own abilities, attempted, unknown to his colleagues, to gain an interest in America, by the means of bribery ; but his offers were instantly rejected, and himself excluded from the commission. This insidious conduct marks the *moral* as well as *political* character of a man, who, by possessing a turbulent and enterprising disposition, has contrived to get the rank of post-captain in the naval service, and a seat in the house of commons, from a situation equally humble and obscure.

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by the French, and the minister was again questioned on the danger of this country, from the alliance which had taken place between France and America, and whether he thought it possible to reduce the latter? Nothing so easy, he replied, we have only to beat the former, and we shall yet triumph in America. "*Indeed!*" No doubt of it, says his Lordship—It is yet in our power to punish the perfidy of the one, and the ingratitude of the other. But you must give me a vote of credit for another million, and continue your confidence to me—" *Most cheerfully,*" it was replied; "*but suppose that Spain should join, how shall we be able to contend against the triple league?*" Impossible, says his Lordship—Spain has colonies of her own to preserve, such an example would be fatal to her authority in Mexico and Peru; besides we have assurances to the contrary, and as Spain is distinguished and adored for attention to the faith of treaties, it would be indecent and ungenerous to suspect her honor;* assist me only in proportion to the emergency of the occasion, and we shall defeat the designs of the Bourbon family, recover America, and establish the authority of the mother country, over her undutiful and rebellious colonies. These promises were vastly flattering and very pretty, and as

* *Vide* Lord Stormont's speech in a debate previous to the delivery of the Spanish manifesto, in which his lordship, and his brother peers in administration, were lavish of their encomiums on *Castilian honour*, and declared *there was not the most distant prospect of a Spanish war.*

a *complaisant* senate could not be rude enough to question the word of a minister, a full assurance of support was again promised to his Lordship. It however unfortunately happened, that Spain forgot she had the dependency of her colonies to preserve; she even violated her Castilian honour, and what was yet worse, she told *fib*s of the minister, in excuse for her taking part with France against us.

The constancy of his Lordship's friends was however equal to the provoking conduct of his enemies; and the former again enquired, with their usual good humour, what was to be done now, that Spain had resolved to be hostile?—Oh! says his Lordship, it is no more than what I expected.* The event has at last happened, which I long dreaded—You must give me a vote of credit for another million, in addition to the supplies which you have already granted—double the militia, and invite Prince Ferdinand † over to command your army, we shall then be in a condition to oppose the invasion, which our enemies have premeditated. At the mention of invasion, a pa-

* It requires no inconsiderable degree of ingenuity to reconcile this confession with the positive assurances of Spain's pacific disposition, which the minister and his associates peremptorily asserted in both houses of parliament, the very week preceding the delivery of the Spanish manifesto.

† The intention of inviting a foreign officer to command our army corresponds exactly with what a late member of the house of commons, and then at the head of the war-office, asserted, in his seat, some few years past, viz. “*That we had not an officer fit to be commander in chief.*”

nic, for the first time, seized the British senate, and an unanimous support was instantly given to the minister, who had progressively laughed at and insulted the whole nation, from the very commencement of his administration, and who deserved impeachment instead of the confidence of parliament. We are now attacked by France and Spain, deserted by Portugal, menaced by Holland, dispossessed of the continent of America, and not only deprived of the affections of three millions of people, and of their commerce, but compelled to contend against their power, at the inconvenient and expensive distance of three thousand miles, without an ally, and even without resources, or at least, resources equal to the peculiar danger and difficulties, with which we are surrounded. Such is the precise situation of this country, at this moment; and when we compare it with the brilliant and unexampled period of 1762, that glorious æra, in which the distant nations of the earth were spectators of our victories, and beheld the united power of the Bourbon family humbled and defeated in every part, what man, who is awake to a sense of honour or of shame, but must execrate the conduct of those ministers, who have reduced us to so mortifying and so impotent a condition? Let the comparison be fairly made between the periods abovementioned of 1762, and the present of 1779,* by the most temperate and dispassionate among us,

* The first naval port, and most important arsenal in the kingdom, being blocked up by a French fleet, affords a triumph to France, which no other nation can boast.

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and it will even then be acknowledged, that we have no great reason to be pleased with our situation, nor with the wisdom and policy of the minister. Facts speak for themselves, and when truths so notorious as these, present themselves to our view, it is impudence and profligacy in the extreme to deny them.

Our successes, last war, had been carried to a height, which past ages had never seen ; to a height, which the present generation had never imagined, and to which posterity will scarce give credit. Animated by repeated victories, our troops became invincible, and under the spirited administration of Mr. Pitt, we had nearly attained the summit of earthly grandeur, when the Earl of Bute stepped forward with his peace of Paris, and in one moment destroyed the splendid advantages, which the wisdom and magnanimity of his predecessor had with equal difficulty and glory acquired.

It was then that gathering clouds darkened the political atmosphere, and presaged the certain, though distant approach of those tempests, which have since shaken the British empire to its foundation. The zeal of the minister, who had forced himself into an office, for which he was unqualified in every respect, was not less conspicuous for preserving peace than it had been for the obtaining it ; and if the interests of the nation had been disregarded in the former instance, the honour and dignity of it has been sacrificed in the latter.

This pacific resolution of the British court, encouraged France very early, after the war, to disturb our salt-works on Turk's Island. Spain afterwards had the audacity to capture one of his majesty's ships of war, in the South Seas, whose rudder she unshipped, and to erect her ensigns over those of England, which till then had been triumphant.* Complaints were transmitted from the governor of Jamaica † of the outrages of the French, and they were submissively represented to the French minister, who at last promised, that no further interruption should be given to our settlers.

The insolence of Spain, exclusive of her injustice in refusing to pay the ransom stipulated in the treaty of peace, ‡ deserved the chastisement of the

* The late Sir C. Saunders, who was also driven from the councils of his sovereign and the service of his country, declared, on that occasion, that Madrid in ashes would not compensate for the insult offered to the British flag.

† In the years 1764 and 1765, from Sir W. Henry Littleton, now Lord Westcote.

‡ Sir William Draper, and the brave companions of his victories and glory, were compelled, after various applications, to give up the Manilla ransom, for the express purpose, as was acknowledged at the time,* of preserving a *good understanding* with the court of Spain. These sacrifices must surely convince the most obstinate mind, that the preservation of peace was a principal object with the crown, to which the motley succession of whig and tory ministers were obliged to conform, as the *fine*

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* Four million of dollars.

the sword, but the minister, obliged to adhere to his instructions, offered the most humiliating concessions, and made a voluntary surrender of an island,* which we had taken possession of, and to which we were entitled by the rights of conquest and discovery. All Europe beheld with astonishment and indignation, the despicable and pusillanimous determination of our councils. We submitted to Spain, and temporised with France; but whenever a disposition appeared in the people at home, or in the distant provinces, to defend their rights against parliamentary or regal encroachments, the drums beat to arms, and the soldiery were ordered out, under the fallacious pretence of supporting the constitution.†

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qua non of their continuing in office. Peace was to be preserved at all events; and as the more important considerations of national honour and national interest were forced to submit to it, we may venture to conclude, without any great violence to truth and probability, that a sincere desire of remaining in perfect good-humour with the powers of Europe was not the *only* motive of this extraordinary conduct.

* Falkland's Island, in the year 1771, in which great warlike preparations were made, and supplies demanded of parliament, as if it had been determined to support the honour of the British flag, and punish the perfidy and insolence of Spain.

† It has ever been an invariable maxim, among princes desirous of reducing or of suppressing the generous spirit of freedom in their subjects, to preserve peace with other nations, that the exercise of domestic tyranny might not be interrupted or prevented by foreign wars; and whenever such a disposition appears in the first magistrate of a free state, it should be immediately

The political maxim of *divide et impera*, had already been avowed in the cabinet and senate, and it had also been discovered, that to *corrupt* as well as to *divide*, was an expedient equally useful in securing a majority in the interests of the crown.*

diately resisted, as the power arising from the loss of liberty is silent, slow, and permanent.

* Whenever this maxim is adopted, it must be for the obtaining of more power than what the constitution admits of. To create parties, in the first instance, and then to incense them against each other, can only be for the purpose of bribing the passions on one side, and afterwards usurping upon both. “ But the prince who pursues this method risks a power he hath for a power he does not want : and he is the more inexcusable under such a constitution as ours ; because, if he could not gain esteem by *great*, he might gain *affection* by his *good*, qualities : for what can he desire more than to be placed at the head of an united people, among whom he may have as many friends as he pleases, and can have no enemies, unless he makes them, by supposing them such, and treating them accordingly ?—If he expects that all his people shall think like him and his council, about every occurrence, about every measure he takes and every man he employs, such an expectation will be founded in folly, and have mischief for its object, since this is too much to ask even of slaves. Shall he proscribe every man, as an enemy to his government, who dislikes the administration of it ?—Proscriptions are abominable and inhuman, when they are backed by a fulness of arbitrary power ; but to hang up the tables of proscription, without the power of sending censurions to cut off every head that wears a face disliked at court, would be madness in the prince, and cannot suit with his interest, whatever it may do with his passions.”

This system of government might possibly at first have proceeded from weakness and incapacity in those, who, unable to govern agreeable to the more rational and popular principles of the constitution, were compelled to apply the riches of the nation, to purchase that support, which wisdom and inflexible honesty, acting on the noble principles of public justice and public virtue, would have commanded even from a venal senate; but this origin of a ruinous and dishonourable system, is the less likely, from the numerous ministers of late years having invariably adopted it. What might have been folly and ignorance in *some*, must have been positive treachery, and downright profligacy, in *others*, and from hence, it is reasonable to infer, that a design had been concerted, towards the conclusion of the last reign, or very early after the commencement of the present, to trust less to the popularity and equity of public treasurers for support, than to the more powerful and captivating influence of the treasury.

The avaricious were bribed with pensions, the vain were gratified with titles, and the ambitious were rewarded with power, in return for the concurrence and support which they gave to government.* Thus strengthened and supported by all
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* The difficulty of obtaining full and ample proofs of facts which are become moral certainties have authorised some to deny them, and others to disbelieve, or rather to affect to disbelieve them ;

the little, as well as by all the great arts of state, the minister might well think himself fortified against an impotent opposition, and sufficiently authorised to depend on a servile majority for an approbation to all his measures ; but though we had become corrupt at home, and insensible to the preservation, if not to the very existence of our free government, yet the people of America were more attentive to their interests, and standing with a glorious fortitude on the adamantine pillars of civil and religious liberty, asserted, in the very face of power, that a British subject could neither be taxed, nor compelled to obey laws to which he had not previously given his consent. The minister consequently met with resistance, when he passed the boundaries of the constitution, to pillage the remote, and, as he thought, *defenceless* colonies ; but a negative was founded from the distant shores of America, as

them ; but what other excuse can possibly be offered for the recent and pitiful conduct of the Duke of Northumberland, in **SUPPLICATING** of the minister (with a fortune of 50,000*l.* per annum in his possession) the office of master of the horse to the King, but his avarice or his vanity ? Governments at home and in the colonies have been created, and offices invented, to provide for those who wished to imitate the great object of their adoration, by tyrannizing in a lesser degree, while a voluminous peerage, and a herd of pensioners, the worthless drones of our hive, prove to a demonstration that the public money, and titles, which ought ever to be the reward of virtue and merit, have been distributed with the wanton and scandalous profusion of a spendthrift, regardless of his future fame and welfare.

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from the voice of Jove ; nor has the thunder of the British arms been able to cancel the *fiat* of truth and justice.

America, in the first instance, exacted nothing more from us than a decent reverence to her chartered and natural rights, and a very moderate attention to them, on our part, would have diverted, and perhaps have prevented, in future, the execution of the design she had formed, to shake off her dependence, whenever we furnished her with an opportunity and excuse, by drawing the sword.* It was the immediate duty, and ought to have been the particular care of the minister, not to have made any claim, that was not explicit, and even acknowledged by the colonies ; and though they are unpardonable, in refusing to return to their allegiance, after having obtained what they pretend only to have fought for, and only to have had in view, from the first moment of the contest,† yet he is without excuse, in having revived an equivocal

* “ Subjects seldom venture upon resistance, which is their last remedy, but in cases of extreme necessity ; and the people, unless their jealousy be raised by repeated injuries, are always ready to view the actions of their sovereign with an *indulgent* eye.”—*Robertson's History of Scotland, vol. I. pages 135 and 271.*

† At the moment that perfidious Gaul, the common enemy of both nations, declared herself the ally of the *one*, intent only

vocal claim, which had already been abandoned as impracticable and inexpedient.

The requisitions from the first Congress were respectful, legal, and equitable ; but unhappily the bayonet was more congenial with that revengeful and vindictive spirit, which had so often appeared on even the most frivolous occasions, and from the worst of motives. It was therefore preferred, and fleets and armies were transported to the other side

on the destruction of the *other*, Great-Britain, humbled and abashed, presented herself at the foot of America, and, acknowledging her offences, condescended to implore her friendship and forgiveness. It was expected that America would have raised her prostrate parent from the earth, and, by rejecting an alliance with France, who had an addition of power and an encrease of commerce more at heart than a sincere reverence for the rights of mankind, have given an unexampled instance of magnanimity and patriotism to an admiring world : but it was asserted, that she could no longer confide in a prince and his administration, who had, by a series of *legalized tyranny*, shewn an inveterate enmity to the constitutional rights of both countries, and, under the full impression of this melancholy idea, she was compelled to look forward to independence. Such was the language and excuse of America, and, intoxicated by the abject humility of one suitor, and the bewitching flattery of the other, she disdained even a conference with the commissioners who went out with an offer of terms more ample and liberal than she had even requested. The insolence of her demands arose in proportion as we fell from our former dignity and extravagance, into timidity and contempt ; and since it has become a question only to be decided by force, whether this country or America shall exist, the part which it behoves us to take is too obvious to admit of a moment's hesitation.

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of the Atlantic, to recover by violence, what had been lost by folly and oppression.

Great industry was employed to obtain the concurrence of the trading part of the nation, to whom it was held out, that unless America was reduced to unconditional submission, the whole of her commerce would be lost to this country : by this artful appeal to their passions, the merchants were betrayed into an approbation of coercion, and the noble and generous flame of liberty, which had illumined this happy island for a series of ages, was in one moment extinguished by a selfish regard to personal interest.

Addressees equally fulsome and violent were presented to the throne, and received with a smile.*

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* Liverpoole and Poole were foremost in expressing their attachment to the throne, not from motives of loyalty to their sovereign, or affection for the constitution ; but from sordid views of interest. Poole, in particular, was anxious to have the Americans excluded the Newfoundland fishery, whom she considered as her rivals in a trade which she wished to monopolize, and who were already in possession of the West-India market. A Quaker, named Lister, and an admiral, who has since rendered himself the object of universal detestation, were called upon by ministry to assert falsehoods at the bar of both houses of parliament ; on which the *starvation* bill, as it is emphatically called, was framed, and which converted several thousands industrious and inoffensive fishermen into soldiers.

The partial and mercenary voice of merchants and manufacturers, anxious to exclude America from all share of their commerce, was alone heard, and prevailed over the dictates of sound policy, as it has since done with respect to Ireland.* Contracts and offices of emolument, which the exigencies of

The address which was presented at St. James's as from the mayor and corporation of the town of Poole, contained the names of entire strangers, who, happening to stop at the public inns, were requested to sign it; but this was not the only instance in which the sovereign had been insulted with a lie. Other arts, equally despicable and mean, were also employed in order to obtain an appearance of unanimity throughout the country, and the real and permanent interests of the kingdom were sacrificed to the unprovoked resentment of the minister, and the contemptible jealousy of mercenary traders——But *si decipi vult populus decipiatur*.

* There never was an instance of a nation, under a free government, more oppressed, nor a people whose complaints deserved more attention and relief, than the Irish. The affluent proprietors of great estates in that neglected island, seldom residing there, spend their fortunes chiefly in England, or on the continent. The taxes, which are raised in it under the pretence of defraying the exigencies of the state, are distributed, to the amount of a million sterling, in pensions on the profligate and indigent, who are also above living in the country which maintains them. Her trade is restricted and oppressed by impolitic acts of parliament, which prove nothing but our power and injustice; and when she submissively described her distressed situation, and implored our compassion; when parliament had even taken her grievances into consideration with an intention to relieve her, a mercenary, ignorant herd of weavers, from a single town, had the presumption to oppose, and the dishonest satisfaction to defeat, the benevolent designs of an abject senate, devoted to the interest of a minister, who preferred the preservation of two votes from Manchester, and as many from Lancashire, to the loyal affections and happiness of an entire nation.

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the times had rendered unavoidable, furnished and provided for some, while others were reduced to poverty and ruin. The gazettes, for a considerable period, contained little else than an account of bankruptcies at home, and losses and disgraceful defeats abroad; yet the minister, enabled by the pernicious influence, which his situation gives him, has persevered in this impolitic war, and involved us in such a variety of difficulties, that it is at last, become necessary to continue it. An appeal to the indisputable evidence of facts, may, perhaps, awaken us to a sense of our situation, and provoke an exertion of national spirit and resentment, to repel the common foe, in the first instance, and afterwards to take ample vengeance on the authors of our calamities. Let us then behold a detail of melancholy facts, of facts so notorious, that *whoever runs may read*.

A mutilated empire engaged in a war, the event of which is as uncertain as is the period of its conclusion, without an ally on whom she can depend, in the moment of danger and necessity for assistance. The most valuable part of her commerce gone for ever into a different channel, and the other part subject to such risque, as to check the adventurous spirit of trade; while her people are oppressed by taxes and by acts of parliament,*
which

* The liberty of the subject, which had hitherto been preserved with so much jealousy and caution, and for which our ancestors were so assiduous to provide, is now no longer regarded

which, in their consequences, tend to the total subversion of their rights and liberties, and to prepare them for that slavery, which, by their abject submission to a shameless cabal, they seem to invite and deserve.

Such

as sacred by parliament, nor as inestimable by the people. Pressing, which had always been declared illegal, and never had recourse to, but in cases of extreme emergency, is now authorised by law, and the officers employed on that obnoxious and disgraceful service, as well as the despicable and indigent herd of Middlesex justices, and their lawless banditti, find impunity for the most wanton barbarity and injustice, in an act which exempts them from legal punishment.

*“ And be it further enacted, that no person or persons shall be
“ sued or molested for taking and impressing, or causing to be taken
“ and impressed, within the time aforesaid, any person or persons
“ for his Majesty’s service at sea, contrary to the provisions of the
“ before recited acts, or any of them.**

The oppressed citizen has no longer a remedy, in the justice and laws of his country, against brutal violence and arbitrary power, but must confide less in that great bulwark of liberty, Magna Charta, than in the humanity or fears of these mercenary delegates of despotism. No ministry but the present, and not even these, in any *other reign*, would have dared to propose, or rather to *demand*, of parliament, so direct a repeal of the constitution. Lord Sandwich had the insolence to declare, in the house of peers, that he would never set his foot in it again, if he was not supported in the impress bill, and it is sincerely to be lamented that their lordships did not take him at his word. This language alone deserved commitment, if not impeachment; but, fortified as ministers are, with placemen and pensioners, they proceed in their dangerous career, regardless of future consequences, as if they were resolved to try the very extent of parliamentary profligacy, and proceed to the very summit of political wickedness.

* Vide the Act.

Such is the precise and dreadful condition, to which this country is reduced, by a progressive chain of events, which have regularly apprised us of what has at last happened ; and as we have not the virtue to bring the perpetrators of our misery and disgrace to condign and exemplary punishment, it must be left to the justice of posterity, to mark with infamy and detestation, the memories of those who have brought the character of their sovereign into disrepute, his crown into absolute danger, and accelerated the decline of the British Empire, by the complicated crimes of treachery, venality, and corruption.

THE following list of our ships and vessels of war, which have been taken, burnt, and destroyed, by the Americans, since the commencement of hostilities, and by the French, since May, 1778, compared with the list of those which were taken by the French between the years 1756, and 1763, will sufficiently prove that our losses in the late glorious war bear no proportion to those which we have already sustained in this ruinous and iniquitous contest.

A List of King's Ships lost, taken, or destroyed, between the Years 1775 and 1779, by the French and Americans.

Lost, taken, &c. by the AMERICANS.

Third rates.

Augusta, of 64 guns, destroyed at Reedy-Island, October 23, 1777.

Somerfet, of 70 guns, lost on Cape Cod, November 3, 1778.

Fifth rates.

Flora, of 32 guns, destroyed August 5, 1778.

Juno, destroyed August 5, 1778.

Lark, destroyed August 5, 1778.

Orpheus, destroyed August 5, 1778.

Sixth rates.

Actæon, of 28 guns, burnt June 28, 1776, at Sullivan's Island.

Cerberus, destroyed August 5, 1778.

Liverpoole, lost on Long-Island, and crew captured, February 11, 1778.

Mermaid, destroyed in August, 1778.

Syren, lost, and crew captured, November 6, 1777.

Mercury, lost in 1777.

Sloops.

Merlin, of 18 guns, destroyed October 22, 1777.

Drake, of 18 guns, taken in 1778.

King's-fisher, destroyed August 30, 1778.

Otter, lost in 1778, on the coast of Carolina.

Zebra, lost, on the Egg-Island expedition, in 1778.

Cruizer, of 8 guns, burnt in Georgia, October 2, 1776.

Armed sloops.

Hinchinbroke, taken April 19, 1778.

Racehorse, taken December 4, 1776.

Sloop on survey.

Diligence, taken July 7, 1775.

Schooner.

Diana, destroyed in May, 1775.

Galleys.

Alarm, destroyed at Rhode-Island in 1778.

Pigot, destroyed at ditto in 1778.

Spitfire, destroyed at ditto in 1778.

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Taken,

Taken, &c. by the FRENCH.

Fifth rates.

Minerva, of 32 guns, taken in August, 1778.

Arethusa, of 32 guns, drove on shore by two ships
of war in 1779.

Sixth rates.

Active, taken in August, 1778.

Fox, taken September 10, 1778.

Lively, of 20 guns, taken July 9, 1778.

Sloops.

Ceres, of 18 guns, taken in 1779.

Helena, taken in 1778.

Senegal, taken in 1778.

Alert, of 12 guns, taken in July, 1778.

Zephyr, of 10 guns, taken in August, 1778.

Weazle, of 16 guns, taken on her passage home,
with dispatches from the West-Indies, in 1779.

Armed floops.

York, taken in July, 1778.

Elephant, taken in 1779, and since retaken.

Bomb.

Thunder, taken in 1778.

Cutter.

Folkstone, taken in June, 1778.

Number

Number of Ships of War taken from the French between the Years 1756 and 1763.

37 Ships of the line,
55 Frigates.

A List of the Ships and Vessels of War taken by the French between the above Years.

Northumberland of 60 Guns,
Warwick, of 50 guns,
Greenwich, of 50 guns,
And three sloops of war.

F I N I S.

